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quickened rhythm of modern life. It is modern life that pulses in the pungent vocable and pregnant phrase, in the nervous, trenchant clause, in the terse, laconic sentence. A complete appreciation of the *rapprochement* between the conversational and the literary styles is needed to bound and define more accurately than as yet any foreign grammarian has succeeded in doing the material that should form the substratum of an ideal grammar of the German language for reference in our higher schools,—and this material in its entirety may be designated as the *Gebildetensprache der Gegenwart in Wort und Schrift*.

OTTO HELLER.

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## REVIEWS

*The Attitude of Gustav Freytag and Julian Schmidt toward English Literature* (1848-1862). By LAWRENCE MARSDEN PRICE, PH. D. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1915. VIII + 119 pp. [Hesperia: Schriften zur germanischen Philologie, 7].

In the cultural relationship of the European nations, strange as the fact may seem today, England was Germany's last love;<sup>1</sup> the first was France, but after the great Revolution of 1789, the awakening among the German people began. While the July revolution of 1830 and the mad year 1848 brought the Germans again under French influence, about 1850 all eyes turned toward England. Thither the persecuted democrats had fled and from there the new gospel of democracy was preached. English institutions appealed to educated Germans as political and social ideals. Goodwill toward England passed as the mark of a higher degree of civilization and culture. In choosing, therefore, the relation of Julian Schmidt and Gustav Freytag to English literature for the subject of his well written and interesting monograph, Dr. Price has selected two of the ablest representatives of this liberal, democratic movement in

<sup>1</sup>In this connection see the recent article by Friedrich Schönnemann, *Theodor Fontane und England*. Publications of the Modern Language Association, September, 1915.

Germany who never tired of dwelling on the advantages of England's social and political system, of which the works of Scott and of Dickens were, in their minds, the outgrowth and who sought to strengthen the literature of their own country by a liberal infusion of English blood. For them, in a word, English literature signified health and strength while the various phases through which German literature had passed since the time of Goethe meant sickness or, at best, only partial convalescence.

When Julian Schmidt—for it is chiefly with Schmidt's work as the literary editor and critic of the *Grenzboten* that this investigation has to do—began his activity there was a wide gap in German intellectual life between theory and practice. German idealism—subjective idealism, as Schmidt called it—was in a state of unhealthy fermentation. In literature it manifested itself chiefly in an effort to escape from realities. The simplest matter could not be judged according to its nature and obvious connections but according to some transcendental system or sequence of ideas. Common reality was rejected, confused and abused by the priests of culture, but never reformed nor ennobled. To find a way out of this formless metaphysics and unbridled imagination into an intellectual world of law and order Schmidt regarded as his chief mission. As the critic himself remarks in regard to Bulwer Lytton's subjective idealism: "Since Goethe and Schiller we have not gone forward because we always begin with the highest problems and keep these as indefinite as possible. We have gone about lugging the problems of Faust and Wilhelm Meister with us and have been for that reason, not in a position to reproduce the smallest and most modest dwelling-house. The highest has not sufficed us and we have not attained the least." And apropos of Spielhagen's *Problematic Natures* he exclaims, "Are we then for all eternity to be condemned to hear of nothing but problematic natures, *i. e.*, natures which never feel, think or will anything in its entirety? Alas! there are enough such problematic natures in real life but why should art serve up the same misery a second time?"

As the most potent antidote for this pathological state of overstrained idealism Schmidt advocated "common sense," by which he meant the average opinion of that industrious middle class which in the recent past had been disparaged in German public life and letters. This practical, common-sense view of life, which never lost its touch with realities, Schmidt found best exemplified in

English literature, and the wholesome features of this literature, its ethical soundness, its genuine humor, its joy in life and its healthy idealization of the real and concrete, the German critic attributes to the advantages of English social life: the freedom and sincerity of English religion, the advantages of English citizenship and the concrete nature of English education whose chief agencies were family life, sport, politics, trade and industry. Thus under the guise of a series of reviews on English literature Schmidt aims to make his generation in Germany conscious of what he regards as the chief defects of their own.

With clear and thorough analysis, illuminating comparisons and discriminating condensations, Dr. Price has presented to us in three chapters the gist of what Schmidt, with this very definite and finite end in view, had to say about such poets as Byron, Shelley, Philip Bailey, Robert Browning, Elisabeth Barret Browning, Tennyson, Longfellow and Poe; and such writers as Bulwer Lytton, Thackeray, Charlotte Brontë, Carlyle, Kingsley, George Eliot, Emerson, Margaret Fuller and Nathaniel Hawthorne. To Scott, Dickens, and Freytag respectively, an entire chapter is devoted and in his monograph Dr. Price has not only succeeded in bringing together in clear and fluent English a body of highly suggestive criticism, worthy, for its own sake, of the attention of the scholar and critic, but he has at the same time, in his able exposition of Schmidt's historical position, made a valuable contribution to the history of German thought in the XIXth century as well as to the study of comparative literature.

To trace Dr. Price's analysis through all its details would go far beyond the limits of a review. Only the barest outline can be attempted here. In treating of the development of Romanticism in Germany and in England, Schmidt pointed out that this movement had expressed itself in two chief forms which he characterized as Medieval Romanticism and Subjective Idealism. Medieval Romanticism Schmidt found best represented by Walter Scott for whom both he and Freytag cherished a well-nigh unqualified admiration. In this essay on Scott, which is one of his best, Schmidt dwells on the different characters which this movement assumed in England and Germany. He much prefers the Medieval Romanticism of Scott to that of the older German Romanticists because of the former's objective attitude toward the romantic world. With all his enthusiasm for his subject the Scotch novelist never abandons

for a moment the point of view of his own age; the earlier German Romanticists with few exceptions, by a process of forced reflection which excluded the point of view of their own time, tried to live themselves back into the thought-world of an unenlightened age and thus allowed their own personalities to evaporate completely in the process. This fundamental difference, Schmidt traces in every branch of Scott's work and emphatically calls the attention of the German Romanticists to the Scotchman's procedure.

The term 'Subjective Idealism' was applied by Schmidt to that later phase of Romanticism which expressed itself in the form of a violent assertion of the right of personality against society. In the case of the older Romanticists the opposition to the spirit of the age had followed in general one channel: the worship of medievalism. The tendencies of the second are, for the most part, subject to all the whims of personal idiosyncrasy. In Germany it was the group of writers who leaned on Goethe, Schiller, Fichte and Schelling, in France those that followed Rousseau and de Stael. But most typical of all was Byron, whom Schmidt defines as the "personification of all the strength, all the weakness and all the delusions of his age." Faust and Don Juan he regards as the typical representatives of this over-stimulated age. As the German philosophers were seeking the solution of man's destiny not in his capacity but in his longings, so the literary heroes of the age were marveled at, not because of what they accomplished but because of the superhuman magnitude of their passion and ambition. "So long as one believes that there is an endless chasm between the possible and the real and sets his ideal in the possible, art is sick," exclaims Schmidt and to this forced idealism he attributes the scepticism and blasé character of the later Romanticism, the introduction of superhuman themes where the finite alone should be the proper subject of art, the disintegration of form and the partial introduction of allegorical interpretation, the natural accompaniment of these superhuman themes.

In the advance of Subjective Idealism in English literature the author shows that Schmidt distinguished five distinct steps: Wordsworth accustomed poetry to philosophic contemplation; Byron gave bold poetic expression to individual instinct in opposition to rules and law; Shelley provided admission to a dreamy play with metaphysical abstractions and formless imagery; then Carlyle natural-

ized German poetry in England not only through his translations but especially through his own style, modelled on that of Jean Paul, and rounded out the cult of genius into a doctrine; finally, from Germany, Hoffmann and Heine, from France particularly Balzac are introduced, and there takes possession of English thought and feeling that poetry of contrast which so interweaves faith and doubt, enthusiasm and irony, arrogance and the blasé spirit that the one abrogates the other. Bulwer Lytton's *Pelham* was the embodiment of this last phase. "He furnishes us the picture of a skeptical period which the English, French, and German peoples have passed through simultaneously, a period which we soon shall have overcome but which, however, cannot be erased from our course of development and which, therefore, deserves a representation in our literature."

While Schmidt on the whole condemns Subjective Idealism as it manifested itself in both English and German literature, in Dickens he found a writer after his own heart. The personal and individual as well as the national characteristics represented by Dickens appealed strongly to the German critic. In Schmidt's view Dickens was not a subjective but an artistic idealist who had faith in a definite moral code and an optimistic view of life and who shows tangibly before our eyes how much joy, beauty and idealism is to be found in very ordinary walks of life. He hails the English novelist, furthermore, as a democratic writer, of the people and for the people, such as Germany had not had for over a century. While Scott's works had appealed to the people they were nevertheless written from the view-point of the landed aristocracy. Such authors as Macaulay and Dickens, however, reassure Schmidt "that the English have not fallen into the error which has become so fatal for the Germans: of creating an art for artists." Dickens was then, in Schmidt's opinion, the first great English novelist who was truly democratic in style as well as in content.

The last chapter of his monograph Dr. Price devotes to an investigation of the part Gustav Freytag played in the tendencies which may be designated as the *Grenzboten* movement. Without implying extensive influence, the author finds that three characteristics which Schmidt regarded as positive features of the English novel are reproduced in Freytag's *Soll und Haben*: the structure of the novel,

the types of character depicted and the social basis of the novel. As a student of dramatic technique Freytag could hardly help being interested in questions of structure. The influence which Scott exerted upon him in this respect may be inferred from his remark in his *Erinnerungen*: "It is the great service of Walter Scott that he has taught with the certainty of a genius to link together the action in a climax and in great final effects."

Furthermore in the manner of his character drawing Freytag frequently reminds one of Scott and Dickens. The characters of the German novelist are either essentially good or bad; problematic natures play no part in his works and, as was usual in the early period, the good receive their reward in good time and in due time the bad their punishment. It was the principle of the *Grenzboten* that the German novel should seek the people at their labor. Since the time of *Wilhelm Meister* the typical hero of the novel had been a dilettant, willing to instruct the people but not to learn from them. In the English novel, on the other hand, the hero and the minor characters as well, had almost invariably been assigned a definite place in the economic world. Freytag made the novel correspond to the conditions of the time by letting characters from productive classes play a chief rôle. Schmidt's critical and Freytag's productive significance lie chiefly in their recognition of the fact that a social revolution had taken place in Germany, no longer the nobleman and the artist over against the citizen class but to the latter the broadest opportunities now lay open. This is what Schmidt taught and Freytag embodied.

Investigators and scholars of the present generation are inclined to attribute to Julian Schmidt a far greater influence on the intellectual life of his day than has been generally recognized in the past. On his critical work as a whole we may pass the same judgment that applies to almost all European literature since Goethe: interesting and instructive but in no sense monumental. The difficulties that lie in the way of an accurate estimate of his literary significance are many. He has left no monumental work, all his criticisms being scattered through the pages of his periodicals. Only after all phases of his work have been brought together in some such fashion as Dr. Price has here achieved for a definite period of his literary activity, can we hope for a complete view.

Again, all his essays are by no means of equal value. As a matter

of fact, Schmidt made a thorough study of only such writers as Scott, Shelley, Byron, Bulwer Lytton, Carlyle, Thackeray and Dickens, and his essays on these authors are worthy of particular attention. Much that he wrote about the others was from a very partial knowledge, conditioned largely by the current necessities of his magazine. But in them all, however superficial some may be, there is the same point of view, the same polemic purpose and the same rigid search for the qualities which Schmidt considered as the *conditiones sine quibus non* of a healthy and beneficent literature.

Constantine Rössler has described Julian Schmidt as a Protestant, a Prussian, a partisan and a polemic. Ethically, Schmidt was a Protestant who believed in a definite moral code and in personal moral responsibility. Politically, combined with his liberal and democratic sympathies, he was an uncompromising Prussian, who believed that the political salvation of the German people resided in the hegemony of the Hohenzollerns. Literarily, he was an enthusiastic advocate of English life and literature and the purposeful utilization of it in a constructive way to combat the tendencies of the German literature of his time. A man with such a definite and decided ethical, political and æsthetic creed is bound to meet with opposition. Critical opinion in regard to him still varies largely in accordance with the extent of the critic's agreement with his moral, political and æsthetic opinions. But this much at least is clear, he has been made to appear too much in the light of a merely negative and destructive critic who opposed Romanticism, the Young German movement, Hebbel and even much of the realism of his day. With all his limitations, Julian Schmidt was a master in the art of literary analysis who has hardly ever been excelled; no modern critic has been endowed with a keener instinct for tracing back national literary characteristics to the social conditions out of which they originated, and combined with these two qualities he possessed that gift which is indispensable to every successful creator of public opinion, the power of epigrammatic condensation.

In his concluding pages Dr. Price is very conservative, in our opinion too conservative, in his estimate of Schmidt's influence on the thought of his day. He finds no great value in Schmidt's attitude toward English literature in and for itself. The German



critic's significance lies rather in the fact that Schmidt was the spokesman of a popular movement of wide political, social and literary bearing. Schmidt formulated most clearly the average opinion of that industrious middle class which in the recent past, disparaged in public life and letters, was now with the rise of the liberal party, to become dominant in German life. Price finds his chief importance, therefore, in his representativeness and in his personal influence which was exerted in a friendly way upon a small circle of literary associates. This may be correct enough if we confine ourselves to a consideration of Schmidt's literary activity. But beyond this influence upon literature which can only express itself through individual writers in the form of literary production, Schmidt's influence on the public at large in the creation of public opinion, must be reckoned with. These influences do not express themselves in æsthetic form but they are none the less potent in shaping the social and political destinies of a whole people. However great exception we may take to his classification of writers and however many tenets in his political and literary creed the present generation may discard, Julian Schmidt, as the spokesman of the progressive movement of his age was, if not a great critic, at least a master-builder in the creation of that public sentiment upon whose foundation Bismarck, a few years later, was to weld together the disunited German states into a compact nation, intellectually, industrially and politically the most efficient and powerful on the continent of Europe.

We congratulate Dr. Price on the excellence of his work. His scholarly thoroughness, clear analysis of content—a content which is made readily accessible by a good table of contents and an excellent index—and the fluent clarity of his English have brought this monograph nearer to the ideal of what such investigations should be than any work of a similar kind with which we have had the fortune to become acquainted within recent years.

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